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W. R. Stroud

REPORT
OF
WORTHY SUPREME GRAND PRESIDENT,
W. R. STROUD,
OF THE
SONS OF ENGLAND B. S.,
AT THE
EIGHTEENTH GRAND LODGE MEETING
HELD IN
MONTREAL, 14TH MARCH, 1893

1873

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*To the Officers and members of the Supreme Grand
Lodge of the S. O. E. B. S.:*

BRETHREN,—Glancing into our official year about ending, we can clearly see, as a Society, we have much to be thankful for. More personal work by the individual members of our Order is being done, and our aims are respected. The retrospect of the year is good and the feelings among the brethren toward each other, with few exceptions, are all we can desire, and we meet as a Grand Body, under the most favorable circumstances, to consider and legislate for the welfare of our Society. I have no doubt but that the spirit of our Constitution and Ritual will so predominate in our sessions, that we will all return satisfied with the voice of the majority.

In presenting my Report for the year 1892-93, I do so with a feeling of pleasure, flattering myself that I have had the sympathy and loyal support of every member of the Executive, officers of the subordinate lodges, the district deputies and of the whole membership of the Order, for which I must offer my sincere thanks, for it has helped to carry out the duties connected with my office as your Executive head for the time being.

Grand Lodge Funds.

According to instructions from the last Grand Lodge, after consultation with the Executive, I caused two accounts to be opened in the Imperial Bank, Toronto, in the name of our Society; one as a General Account and the other for the Beneficiary, and as the monies are received by the Supreme Grand Secretary they are deposited daily to the credit of each account. These funds can only be drawn by your Supreme Grand Lodge Trustees, and then only on an order signed by the Supreme Grand President and Supreme Grand Secretary, to the order of the Supreme Grand Treasurer.

The Special Committee appointed by your last Grand Body (see page 79, Grand Lodge Report, 1891-92), for the purpose of revising the constitution, by-laws, etc., of our Society, was regularly called and met in the Society's office, Toronto; and, after electing P S G P Bro. Dr. King, as chairman, went assiduously to work on the important matter committed to their charge. The result of their deliberations is now in your hands, and I commend the same to your careful consideration.

Membership.

Clause No. 1 of our Constitution states that the object of our Society is the bringing together of Englishmen for their mutual benefit and support, and for the maintenance of British connection. Are we doing this as perfectly as could be desired? For some time past I have felt that we are not, and that the terms of admission and limited privileges which we at present accord to those we are pleased to call "honorary" members, are not in accordance with the spirit of our Constitution. What I would desire to see is that all Englishmen joining our Society should first of all become members by paying an initiation fee and so much a month as lodge dues, these dues; to be known as a General Fund, out of which all current lodge expenses and the Capitation tax to Grand Lodge should be paid.

Members who then desired to enter the Sick and Funeral or Beneficiary Departments, or any other departments that may be created in the future, could make choice, and as distinctly departmental institutions, could be supported and controlled by those members of the Society directly interested in each Department, at a rate of payment materially less than at present. The Funeral Tax could be paid by Grand Lodge as at present, and 25 cents per month would afford a General Fund for lodges sufficient to meet all expenses common to all members of a lodge.

A member who may be a defaulter in keeping his dues to any Department paid up would not have his standing in another department in which he stood good affected thereby, and so long as he kept himself in good standing in the lodge he would be retained instead of lost to this Society of Englishmen. Many members find it hard that their standing in the Beneficiary Department is affected by their standing in the Sick and Funeral Department. This I humbly submit is wrong, and is causing the Society to be working at a decided disadvantage.

2 There are many good and influential Englishmen who are willing to become members only, but who do not require monetary benefits, having all the insurance and other benefits they require. I would respectfully suggest that this Grand Body seriously consider these suggestions.

There has been, and is still, a slight agitation, which appears to be growing among some of our brethren, to extend the privileges of becoming members of our Society, on what they term broader lines than those laid down in

Clause IV, par. 8, of our Constitution, to admit descendants of female as well as male ancestors. Should such be entertained by this Sup. Grand Body I think it would be a mistake to continue to be known as the Sons of England. Our constitution appears very liberal in its interpretation of who an Englishman is, and if this clause is changed I would respectfully suggest that the privileges of our Society be extended to all who can accept our constitution and ritual as at present.

Improved Accommodation Necessary.

The growth and requirements of our Order are such that we must have better office accommodation. It is impossible for the Supreme Grand Secretary to do his office work as it should be done with the present office facilities. I would recommend that the Executive for the year 1893-94 be empowered to procure suitable offices, which would enable the officials to carry on the work and keep the records in a more perfect manner. Any observant visitor to our Supreme Grand Secretary's office cannot but feel the desirability of the change suggested.

Supreme Grand Secretary's Office.

The necessity for as little change as possible in the personal of this office and the continued confidence shown our esteemed Supreme Grand Secretary, in repeatedly electing him for so many years, has deprived him of the privilege of being elected for the highest office in our Order; in view of this and the careful and exemplary manner in which he has carried out his instructions, I would suggest that this Grand Body confer upon him the highest gift in its power, and create him a Past Supreme Grand President.

Any one who has had the pleasure of meeting and working with our Supreme Grand Secretary knows what a deep interest he takes in all things pertaining to our Society. That he is attentive to his duties no one will contradict, but he should be placed in such a position that it would not be necessary for him to engage in any work but our own, and I trust this Grand Body will pass a resolution prohibiting the Supreme Grand Secretary from engaging in any other work than that required by this Society.

Numerous objections have been raised to employing lady assistants in the Supreme Grand Secretary's office, and after giving this matter considerable thought, I am of the opinion that they are better suited to that class

of work than a male assistant. All rituals and agendas are under lock and key, and when required are handled by the Supreme Grand Secretary himself.

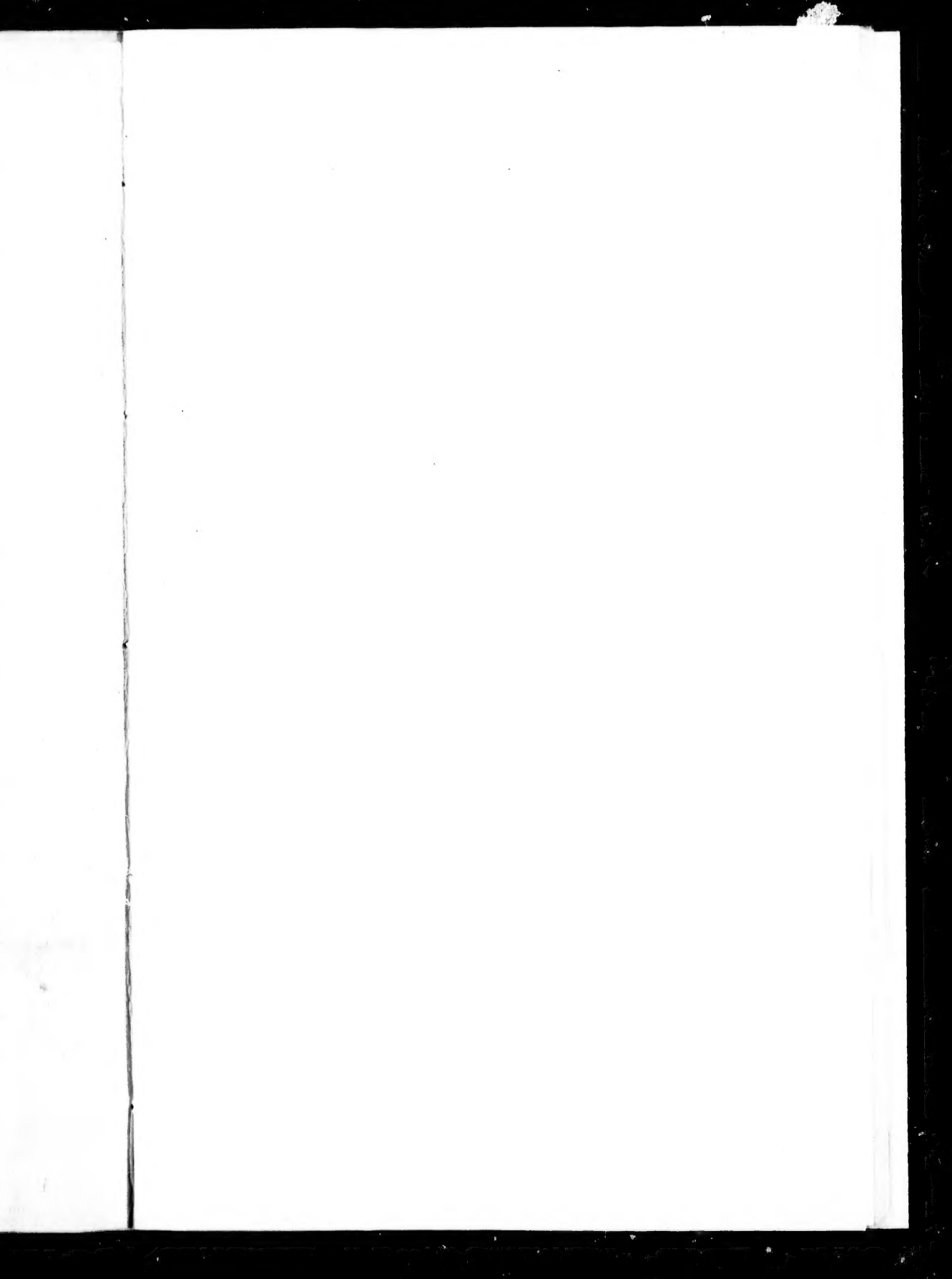
Opening up New Territory.

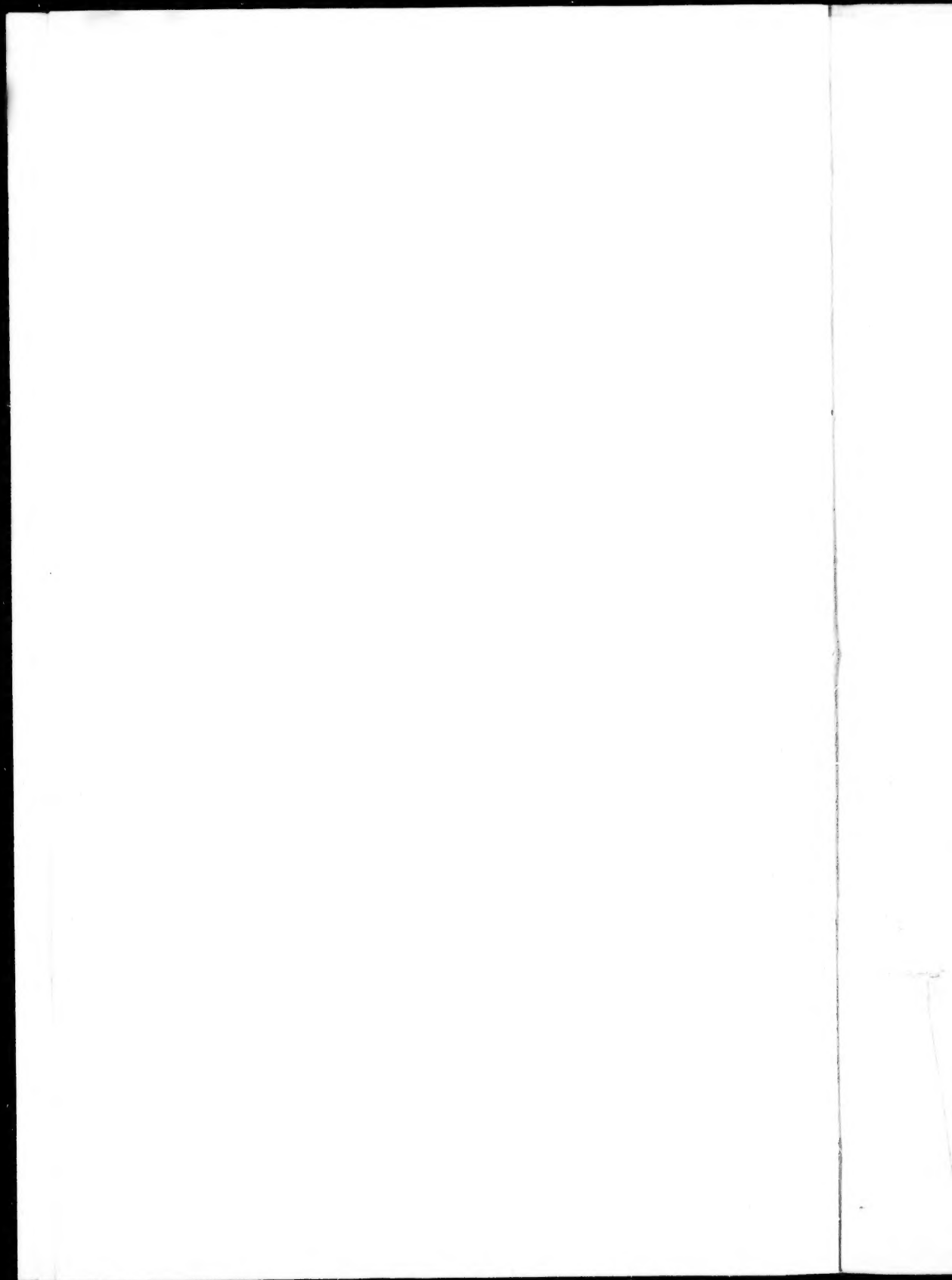
The number of new lodges opened this year shows that the Society is becoming better known, that Englishmen desire to be better acquainted with Englishmen, and even if thousands of miles separate us from the Old Land, our memories are such that we wish to be known as Englishmen.

It is generally accepted that the Order is sufficiently known throughout Ontario and Quebec, that a natural growth of lodges and members may reasonably be expected in these provinces. Such cannot be said of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. These provinces are being largely settled by this countrymen, and following out the purpose of our organization we should have lodges in every village and township in Manitoba and the Territories. This is a matter of vital importance to the Order, not only in the interest of new members, but the success of the old lodges is greatly dependent upon lodges being opened up speedily in those sections of our country. I would recommend that some well informed Brother be engaged for three or six months this year in doing this work. The new Executive should be empowered to act, and after consulting with the brethren in Winnipeg for information, go to work. Other societies are up and doing in this direction, and we should be there also, getting new lodges opened, and gathering into our lodges the large influx of Englishmen going to those localities. I feel that without some definite action is taken on these lines, what few lodges we have west of Winnipeg will be lost.

Should your honorable body act upon the foregoing suggestion, and if found practicable, I would suggest that the same course of action be carried out in respect to the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

I deeply much regret that owing to various reasons I was unable to visit lodges in those provinces, but one cannot help noticing the great spirit of loyalty and patriotism which exists amongst our brethren down by the sea, and I hope that some member of the Executive will be able to officially visit all the lodges east of Montreal this summer. This matter of official visiting is another strong reason why the Supreme Grand Secretary should be free from other engage-





ments to enable him to officially visit subordinate lodges. Many lodges on our register have never seen an Executive officer since getting their charter. This should not be so. Our weak lodges require encouragement and personal supervision, and the Supreme Grand Secretary is the proper officer to do such work.

Before leaving the subject of new lodges, I would like to state that whenever I have had the honor to officially open a new lodge, I have been received with hearty demonstrations of goodwill and respect. Loyalty to our principles appears to be deep rooted, and after joining our Order, every member is rejoicing to know he is enrolled on our register.

The Daughters of England.

I have the honor to submit herewith a communication from the Daughters of England, which I commend to your careful consideration. In connection with this petition, I was waited upon personally by the Grand President of that Order (who is also a member of our Society) asking permission to issue a circular to our subordinate lodges. After the action of the last two Supreme Grand Lodges with reference to this matter, I could not take the responsibility of granting that privilege. In considering this petition I would request that this Supreme Grand Body legislate definitely in this matter.

Correspondence, etc.

I also submit for your careful consideration copy of correspondence between Bro. Pritchard the W. Secretary of Lodge Preston, and P. S. G. P. Caddick, in re investment of Lodge Funds. This is an important matter, and I would respectfully request from this Grand body a decision. You will notice that Bro. Pritchard, intimates that certain business is about to come before his lodge, which he thinks is illegal, and to fortify himself in the position he desires the opinion of the Executive. I have refused to give an opinion officially without the question comes to me under the lodge seal or from a Minister Deputy, asking advice. Therefore I have given no decision in this matter.

I also submit for your careful consideration a communication from Lodge Durham in re the death of our late Bro. Welch, also the S. G. V. President's Report on the case, and would stongly endorse his recommendation—at the same time do not wish it regarded as an established precedent.

An application has been received from the brethren of Winnipeg, requesting permission from your Executive to form a Sons of England Building Society for the purposes of building a Sons of England Society Hall in that city, and for the purposes of general business as a building society. Owing to the provisions of clause 130 (a) of our Constitution, I did not feel justified in according to this request—though fully satisfied that the promoters thereof are all worthy brethren.

District Deputies.

I have to thank the District Deputies of the several districts for the zeal and energy shown by them in the discharge of their duties, and herewith I submit to your honorable body the same report, which I consider should be referred to a special committee. The following is an extract of instructions issued from the Supreme Grand Secretary's office, under my instructions, which I trust will meet with your approval:—

“The District Deputy has been instructed to examine the books of the Secretary and Treasurer, and report thereon to the Executive; we therefore recommend the officers concerned to have their books in readiness for such inspection.

“For the assistance of the Lodge Treasurer, we recommend that all orders for the payment of accounts be signed on the back by the party receiving the money.

“For the benefit of the Auditors, we recommend that a certain number of members' contribution books be called in and compared with the Secretary's cash and ledger books. The Secretary's and Treasurer's books must be ready for the Auditors within seven days of quarter night.

“The returns must be sent in to the Supreme Executive within one month from quarterly night.

“The Executive cannot be held responsible for the actions of any of its officers that occur over one quarter, when the books are audited and reported upon.

“As the Grand Lodge has to pay the expenses of the yearly official visit of the District Deputy, the Executive requests that the Secretaries send a certificate, under seal of the Lodge, notifying them of the date and time of such visit. All visits by request of the Lodge must be paid for by the Lodge.”

Violations of the Constitution

I regret to have to report that during my term of office repeated violations of the first paragraph of Clause 122 of the Constitution have been brought to my notice, in regard to reports and criticisms of this Society's actions, or the actions of individual lodges, through the public press of the country, causing a large amount of official embarrassment to your Executive. I refer more especially to municipal and other public questions. While thus expressing my disapproval, I would wish to remind members of this Society that the Supreme Grand Lodge is the only constitutional channel through which the public voice of this Society can be known, and legitimate expression be given to thought and feelings that may properly exist in our lodges. Isolated public action of an individual or a lodge is to be strongly deprecated on questions which the whole Society can properly—in accordance with our principles—claim to have an equal voice. It nevertheless remains true that just in proportion as this grand body may avoid dealing with such public questions as may fittingly be regarded as within its proper scope of action, by just so much will a temptation be placed on the actions of its subordinates to act in the way complained of; as thoughts and feelings which we are banded together professedly to cherish and uphold cannot be smothered, but should find a legitimate outlet and expression by this grand body.

In conclusion let me express the joy it has afforded me in being associated with so many of my fellow-countrymen in upholding the noble and patriotic aims and objects of this Society; and further, the deep sense of gratitude and pride I have felt in being placed in such an honourable position as your Supreme Grand President during the past year. The English nation, in the wisdom and goodness of God, seemingly, is a highly favoured nation; in the possession of a territorial dominion that makes it the envy of all other nations; in the enjoyment of such genuine and wholesome liberties which have won it a name to be proud of amongst all the suffering, and down-trodden of humanity throughout the world; as the first and foremost—if not the only one—great Protestant nation, it has been like a beacon light of Christian truth amidst the grossest spiritual darkness and superstition.

Englishmen! forgive me if I appeal to the honest and legitimate national pride and thankfulness which I am sure fill your hearts, when we one and all contemplate our high calling and glowing future destiny amongst the nations of the earth, to remember that we are the children of renowned ancestors; that a heritage of national blessings have been by their blood and treasure bequeathed to us, and that it is our duty to hand those blessings down undiminished in unsullied glory to our children.

Let not the voice of secession from the Unity of the Empire be tolerated in our midst; let us never be recreant and false to the blood that flows in our veins and to the glorious position our nation has attained, or look on calmly and unmoved on the wrecking of an empire whose present glory is but a faint foreshadowing of future possibilities; nor let us become in history the contempt and scorn of mankind, through cowardly fears of maintaining the national greatness God has given us; nor sink into the imbecile folly of sacrificing national weal to serve the greed and narrowness of mind of an unpardonable selfishness.

Let us one and all in our annual gatherings of this grand Body, as it were, renew our vows of heartfelt devotion to our God, our Queen, our nation and to one another, and may the Divine Source of all our blessings bless us one and all is the wish of

Fraternally yours,

W. R. STROUD,

Supreme Grand President.

